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## Birding In Texas

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LAMONI, IOWA

After spending three winters in Arizona, I wanted to go to Texas. On December 10, 1974, we rented an apartment in Harlingen, Texas. Two good wildlife refuges are near Harlingen - the Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge to the west and the Laguna Atascosa Refuge to the east.

My favorite was Santa Ana and I visited this refuge seventeen times before I left Texas on March 11. This refuge is a 2000 acre remnant of subtropical forest where many plants, animals, and birds seldom seen anywhere else in the United States are found. Since it is located on a bend of the Rio Grande River, which divides the U.S. from Mexico, the refuge is particularly famous for many birds of Mexican origin which reach their northern limit in extreme south Texas.

On Willow Lake near the refuge headquarters we were happy to see our first Least Grebe, a tiny grebe with a slender dark bill and only six and one half inches in length. Common Gallinules were often found swimming near the grebe but would disappear into the cattails if we approached too closely. Along the trail of this lake, one often saw Greater Kiskadees, fishing like a kingfisher. I spent much time one day watching three beautiful Black-necked Stilts running pugnaciously, challenging each other in water that was only an inch or two deep. Stilts have such extremely long legs in proportion to their body size. There was one American Avocet among the stilts in his winter colors of black and white. This one was scooping up something from the water as he darted in and out among the stilts.

One can see many species of ducks on the lakes in Santa Ana, but Cinnamon Teal were the most exciting for me as it is a red letter day if one can see a Cinnamon Teal in Iowa. There are many shorebirds here and it takes time, patience, and much study to identify them in their winter plumage, especially the Stilt Sandpipers. A Greater Yellowlegs could always be found at Pintail Lake, so very noisy with his three note whistle. One day I saw a Vermilion Flycatcher and an Eastern Phoebe perched on weeds near the Yellowlegs.

In the photo blind near the headquarters, there was room for only two. Plain Chachalacas by the dozens were eating the seeds that a government employee had scattered on the ground for them. The Green Jays did not come down to the ground to eat until we were quiet in the blind and it helped if one of us would leave. One day I counted thirteen of these beautiful jays. A cup of sugar water extended from a branch and a Altamira Oriole came to drink. He is one of the largest orioles that can be seen in the United States, being eight and one half inches in length. What a beautiful orange! Another oriole that we saw here was the Hooded Oriole. White-fronted Doves mingled among the Plain Chachalacas and the Green Jays. I was adding many new birds to my life list, but I was having no luck finding several that I had come to Texas to see.

I talked to Cruz Martinez, a maintenance man for the refuge, and asked him how to find the Black-headed Oriole, the White-eyed Vireo, and the Olive Sparrow. He showed me a map of the refuge and said, "Every morning I take suet, seeds, and sugar water to this place at the end of the Chinaberry Trail. Come early in the morning after I have been there. You just can't miss seeing the Black-headed Oriole!"

On January 18, Ruth Phipps and I left Harlingen, Texas, before daylight. Ruth, who lives in Shenandoah, Iowa, was spending the winter in Texas, too, and together we had some good birding trips. A few miles west of Harlingen, we ran



into dense fog, so dense we could see only a short distance ahead. There was no turning around on the Interstate so we kept going. By the time we reached the refuge, the sun was beginning to peep through the clouds and the fog was lifting. We parked our car and walked the Chinaberry Trail bordered on both sides by jungle-like brush, mosquito, ebony trees, and much cactus. Blue-gray Gnatcatchers were darting through the bushes as if someone were chasing them, spreading and twitching their tails and raising their wings, all the time lisping that thin "Tsee." Golden-crowned and Ruby-crowned Kinglets and Orange-crowned Warblers were busy hunting insects along the trail. A Black-crested Titmouse came close to a branch on the trail and looked at us. Two Harris Hawks, perched high in a leafless tree, showed the chestnut on the shoulder and the thigh, a distinctive mark of the Harris Hawk.

Oh what a beautiful morning! The air was cool, the birds were singing, and it was a grand feeling just to be alive and attuned to all the nature around us. Finally we reached the end of the trail, with the Rio Grande River to the right and Cruz's feeding area to the left. He had already been there and replenished the feeders. A Green Jay had just left the suet, leaving the container swaying back and forth. A Long-billed Thrasher came to pick up the seeds on the ground and a Cardinal came out of the underbrush. There was no photo blind in this area so we were watching through an opening in the trees, trying to conceal ourselves as best we could.

An Altamira Oriole came to feed. I was surprised when he went directly to the suet rather than to the sugar water. The Long-billed Thrasher mounted to the top-most branch and poured forth his song, a song that resembles our Iowa Brown Thrasher. The poet, Robert Browning wrote these lines:

"That's the wise thrush; he sings his song twice over

Lest you should think he never could recapture

That first fine careless rapture."

Of course Browning had reference to a true thrush in England, but the words fit our Brown Thrasher, whom most people call the "Brown Thrush." We stood enthralled listening to the Long-billed Thrasher pour forth his melody on that day in January.

"I see him! I see the Black-headed Oriole!" exclaimed Ruth. Ruth, being taller than I, spotted him high up in the branches, and then he was gone. Ruth was already making a notation in her little black book. I supposed I had lost my opportunity to ever see a Black-headed Oriole. Ruth never gives up. She suggested we stay there until he came back. The Altamira kept coming back to the suet. And then I saw him, a big golden-yellow oriole with a black head and throat, black wings and tail, almost as large as the Altamira Oriole. He came directly to the suet to feed and then dropped down to a branch almost near the ground and faced me. I could see the ragged black on his breast as pictured on page 284 in Robbin's book **Birds of North America**.

Now we had the long walk back on the Chinaberry Trail where we parked our car. Three birds flew up from the trail into the mesquite. They were Pyrrhuloxias, birds I had often seen in Arizona. We heard a song, not familiar to us. "Chick! - a per - weooo Chick!" Ruth and I left the trail and ventured into the grassy area ducking under the branches of the mesquite and avoiding the cactus, keeping our eyes at times on the ground for snakes, although there is little danger of poisonous snakes in Santa Ana. We did come across a snake one time, though, one they called an Indigo snake, a large black snake with light salmon colored underside. We had been told he was harmless; rattlesnakes avoid this snake. That song kept eluding us as we penetrated farther and farther into the semi-tropical jungle. Finally the elusive bird mounted to the top of a dead branch, threw back his head and sang again. Yes, it did have wing bars, a vireo bill, yellow spectacles, and that fierce-

looking white eye. No mistake! It was a White-eyed Vireo.

On the way home to the headquarters, we stopped at the photo blind near the lunch area. We were in this blind watching the birds coming to the feeders, when Ruth heard a song similar to our Iowa Field Sparrow's song, only louder and more metallic. From the door of the blind we were surprised to see two Olive Sparrows sitting on the lower branch of a tree. The tangled haunts of the Olive Sparrow prohibit easy view and they are such wary creatures, but here concealed in the blind, we could study the Olive Sparrow, feather by feather. We could easily see the medium stripe through the crown. The unstreaked body, the olive underparts, and the rounded tail made this bird look more like a Green-tailed Towhee than a sparrow. My dream of seeing the Black-headed Oriole, the White-eyed Vireo, and the Olive Sparrow in Texas had come true.

I asked Cruz Martinez where we could find the Black-bellied Tree Ducks. He said to drive east on the dike for almost two miles after one leaves the main entrance of Santa Ana. He said he had found over 200 on this lake for the Audubon Christmas Census and they were still there; however this lake was outside of the refuge. We parked our car on the highway and took our scopes to the edge of the lake where large palm trees were bordering the lake. What a sight to behold! All those tree ducks and with them in the trees on the island were many Yellow-crowned Night Herons and a few Black-crowned Night Herons. Many of the tree ducks were swimming in the water, but others were standing with the turtles. We also found American Anhingas and Olivaceous Cormorants here.

On January 29, we had an unusual experience at Santa Ana. Ruth and I and our husbands, Wayne and Wallace, left Harlingen to see the Pauraques, a neotropical relative of our Iowa Whip-poor-will. The word is pronounced like "par-rock' - key." When darkness came we drove the roads of the refuge looking for the Pauraques. I played my tape recorder with their call and they answered from a distance. Finally we found them sitting on the ground. With our flashlights we could see their orange eyes flashing in the darkness. When we approached too closely, this nocturnal bird would flutter away like a huge moth through and under the trees.

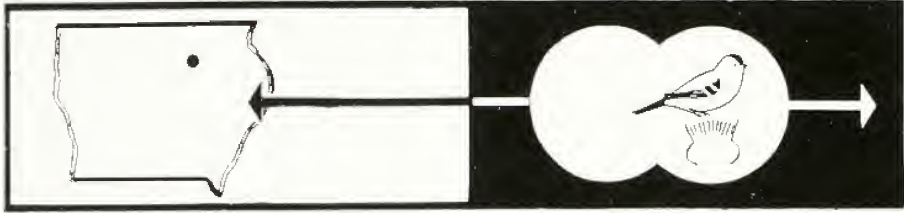
Wayne stopped the car once, backed up, and said, "Is that an owl?" Ruth exclaimed, "Oh, look, an Elf Owl!" With the aid of a flashlight we could see how tiny he was, no larger than a House Sparrow. He had no ear tufts and a stubby tail.

We cannot leave Santa Ana without mentioning the hummingbirds we saw there. Near the building of the headquarters, the red Turk's Cap was in bloom. The Buff-bellied Hummingbirds spent much time here sipping the nectar from the flowers and drinking the sugar water from the feeders that Cruz kept filled. One day we saw a Rufous Hummingbird here competing with the larger Buff-bellied. Texas had a freeze in the lower valley the last of January, and we did not see hummingbirds after that.

Our last trip to Santa Ana was on March 7. A couple from California whom we had learned to know often went with us. We called them Lindy and Nancy. They were both retired, had sold their home, and were living in a mobile trailer, traveling from one state to another in search of new birds for their life list. We had been told at the headquarters that visitors to the refuge were seeing the Olive-backed Warbler on the trail bordering the Rio Grande River. Ruth wanted this one for her life list. We walked the trail heavily bordered by jungle-like trees, vines, and shrubs. It was Lindy who spotted the Olive-backed Warbler for us and later found the Northern Beardless Flycatcher. Both of these species have been recorded as nesting in the refuge.

I added 44 new birds to my life list while in Texas and 28 of those were first seen at Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge.





## Birding areas in Iowa - Charles City

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EL PASO, TEXAS

Charles City is located in the northeast part of the state of Iowa in Floyd County. Although it lies in a highly agricultural area, there are some good areas for woodland birding right on the outskirts of town.

Probably the best of these is the Riverbend Conservation Park which is adjacent to the city cemetery. It can be entered from the road leading to the cemetery, where the main trail starts; or, if the sun is wrong you can follow the railroad tracks which run parallel to the woods. The tracks run on past the opposite end of the park, and you can pick up the trail at the end, and follow it back through the park. The park follows the Cedar River for a short ways, and culminates at the bend in the river. Most of the vegetation is deciduous, although there is a small stand of conifers at the end of the trail. A large part of the park is so grown over with brushy tangles and thorns, that walking any place besides the trail is difficult. The first part of the park is somewhat boggy, and broods of Mallards can often be found here.

If you are birding here between mid-November and late March, you could expect the following species: Ring-necked Pheasant (along the tracks), Great Horned Owl, Barred Owl, Common Screech Owl, Downy, Hairy and Red-bellied Woodpeckers (the Red-bellied is the least common), Blue Jay, Common Crow, Black-capped Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Brown Creeper, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Cedar Waxwing, Northern Cardinal, Purple Finch, Northern Junco, and early-late migrating, or over-wintering sparrows (best along the tracks).

Spring and fall migration brings good numbers of the usual transient passerines. Migrant sparrows, finches, and towhees are most likely to be seen along the railroad tracks, while warblers may be found either in the deeper woods, or along the edges. The only shorebirds seen here in migration have been the Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Common Snipe, and American Woodcock (seen only once). Good numbers of blackbirds may be seen in the cattail marsh across the river, as well as an occasional Northern Harrier or Short-eared Owl.

Summer can also make for good birding. At this time of year, birding is best along the railroad tracks. There are more birds, it is easier to see, and the mosquitos aren't so bad. Birds typically seen along here in summer include: Great Crested Flycatcher, House Wren, Gray Catbird, Common Yellowthroat, Northern Oriole, Northern Cardinal, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, and Indigo Bunting (often seen singing from bare branches in the tops of trees). Watch the sky for Swainson's, Red-tailed, and Red-shouldered Hawks (recorded once). Swallows of five different species can be seen skimming over the river.

The cemetery can be good in migration and winter, but is usually too well kept to attract a variety of birds. Another good area is on past the cemetery on the same road. On the way you will pass by a pond and over a small bridge. Check these places for migrating grebes, waterfowl, herons, and shorebirds. Snipe can often be seen along the banks of the stream to the left of the road. Continue on the road until you come to Oak Park. This park has essentially the same avifauna as Riverbend, but is more open. Red-headed Woodpeckers and Common Flickers replace the Hairy and Downy. *Empidonax* flycatchers and Orchard Orioles (the oriole nests) are to be found here also. In the more wooded area, close to one of the many off-shoots of the river, we have found both Green and Black-crowned Night Herons, as well as Belted Kingfisher.

Anyone visiting the area should stop at 306 7th Ave. and ask about specific directions. Ask for Jim Zimmer, who has birded these areas several times. In the event that Jim is not home, any of the other family members will be able to direct you to these spots.

## FIELD REPORTS



The species marked with \* are on the Blue List of the AOU (Am. Birds 29:1067, 1976), on the Iowa Blue List (IBL XLV:95, 1975) and-or on Dean Roosa's list of endangered, threatened or declining species in Iowa (IBL XLVI:40, 1976).

**Abbreviations used:** CoR, Coralville Reservoir; RRR, Red Rock Lake, Reservoir and Refuge; NWR, National Wildlife Refuge; HHP, Hickory Hill Park (Iowa City); m.ob., many observers.

**Weather.** The weather throughout the period was colder than average, and characterized by a drought of increasing severity: November was the driest in over 100 years.

**General trends.** Good shorebird habitat was present at RRR and along the receding Mississippi, but not at Des Moines or the CoR. The record cold after Thanksgiving caused most lakes, reservoirs and rivers, low because of the drought, to freeze over, thus forcing waterfowl and other piscivorous birds to move out before the end of the period. An intriguing possibility that patterns of passerine migration in the state are changing, with an eastward shift of central migrants, deserves mention. For the second year, the Alleman TV tower kill has been substantially down (1976:301; 1975:200; 1973-74:1500-1600, DM), and contributors from the central portions of the state reported a much more lackluster migration of vireos, warblers and sparrows than those from the eastern third.

**Loons through Cormorants.** Com. Loons were seen on the CoR and L. Macbride from October 20 to November 13, with a high count of 7 on October 31 (m.ob.). There were 2 at Lock 13 on October 31 (PP). A Red-necked Grebe near Des Moines was observed on September 23 (WB,RM). Horned Grebes, with the exception of 2 at Lock 13 on October 31 (PP), were all seen on the CoR, September 21-November 4, with a maximum of 40+ on October 27 (NH). While most \*Am. White Pelicans moved along their ancestral flyways (40 in early October at Hamburg, IG; 4 until September 13 at RRR, GB, and 6 briefly at the CoR on October 4, NH), the famous



squatter at Princeton, present in the area since December 1975, became "a bird for all seasons". Only RRR ran up a respectable count of \* Double-crested Cormorants (30 on October 1, GB); elsewhere, one was seen on L. Macbride October 4 (MN) and 2 at Lock 13 on October 31 (PP).

**Hérons through Geese.** The usual fall concentrations of Great Blue Herons were observed, with the high count (250) from the Ruthven-Trumbull lake region (JD); the peak count at RRR was, at 200, down from 300+ last year (GB). An imm. Little Blue Heron was spotted on September 23 at Brenton's Slough near Des Moines (RM, WB). A Cattle Egret was reported from Dewey's Pasture, Palo Alto Co. (September 3, JD). Five Great Egrets were seen on September 1 and October 1 at RRR (GB), and 20 roosted between September 25 and October 6 in trees on the CoR (MN,NH). The only reports of \* Black-crowned Night Herons (5 on August 31), Yellow-crowned Night Herons (6 on August 30) and Am. Bitterns (4 on August 31) came from RRR (GB). A remarkable number of Whistling Swans (121) was observed at Lock and Dam No. 9 of the Mississippi on November 18 (DK). The maximum count of Canada Geese at RRR was low (200, GB); there were 2000+ at Mark Twain NWR on November 14 (PP). Eleven Gr. White-fronted Geese at RRR in October (Carl Priebe fide GB) were east of their main flyway. Snow Geese appeared at Hamburg on September 23 (IG); 200 were at RRR for a brief time (GB), and 500 at Mark Twain NWR on November 14 (PP).

**Ducks.** Migration was poor at Ankeny (DM), dull at Des Moines ("mostly Mallards", WB), and unspectacular along the Mississippi, but all regularly occurring species were seen at RRR and the CoR (GB, NH), albeit several of them only in small numbers. At RRR, Carl Priebe recorded a peak count of 20-25,000 Mallards from an airplane (fide GB). Two Black Ducks at DeSoto NWR on October 23 were W of their usual range (JD). \* Canvasbacks were reported from RRR (GB), Mark Twain NWR (PP) and the CoR, where the highest count (23 pairs) was tallied (NH) on November 2.

**Diurnal Raptors.** The largest concentration of Turkey Vultures seen was over RRR, where about 150 were on September 19. \* Sharp-shinned Hawks made an encouraging showing in several places: Petersen netted 9 between September 6 and October 20. The frequency of sightings impressed observers in the Iowa City area; DeCoster saw 22 between August 29 and October 5, with 12 occurring over the Macbride Field Campus between 11 a.m. and noon on October 4! \* Cooper's Hawk is a different story: only one was seen, on November 28 near Decorah (DK). (Note: In my opinion, the "Cooper's Hawk" observed on the September 18 IOU field trip near Palo was a Sharp-shinned.) Red-tailed Hawks were ubiquitous, but in very unimpressive numbers. The 2 \* Red-shouldered seen were in Iowa City on September 23 (MN) and October 15 (RD). The largest kettles of \* Broad-winged Hawks reported contained about 200 (September 18, HHP,MN), 80 (September 22, *ibid.*, RD) and 100+ individuals (September 15, RRR, Felsings fide BG), respectively. Rough-legged Hawks near the CoR made an early appearance on September 29 (NH), but thereafter remained rather scarce. Bald Eagles first appeared on September 26 at RRR, and 8 were still sitting on the ice November 29 (GB); in the Davenport area, they didn't arrive until November 22 (PP). \* N. Harriers were regularly found during the period by visitors to the CoR (up to 4); they were "exceptionally scarce" at Sioux Center (JV). Single \* Ospreys were seen from September 19 to October 12 at Credit Island (A. Mueller fide PP), RRR (GB), the Iowa City area (PP,RD,MN,NH), and N of Hamburg (IG). It is possible that all the Iowa City observers saw the same wide-ranging bird. An adult \* Peregrine Falcon was carefully described by Mike Newlon. The Newlons and Calvin Knights saw the bird on September 26 by the CoR. Next morning, it was still



present (RD). A \*Merlin in imm.-female type plumage was seen by Swan L. on September 16 (NH). The only favorable report about \*Am. Kestrels came from Ankeny, where 24 were banded between September 24 and October 3 (DM); they were very scarce in Sioux Center (JV), and ratios of Sharp-shinned Hawk-Am. Kestrel observations recorded by 3 Iowa City birders (2:1, NH; 3:1, MN; 4:1, RD) were the reverse of what one would expect.

**Turkeys through Coots.** Six Wild Turkeys at Yellow River Forest on November 18 constitute the only record of this species for the season (DK). Only one Virginia Rail was seen, on September 5 at the CoR (MN), but Soras were common in the weedy fields around it throughout September (MN,NH), and A. Mueller with (PP) counted 25 at Credit Island on September 4. There were several waves of over 1000 Am. Coots 3-4 days apart on the CoR (NH) in early October.

**Shorebirds.** Piping Plovers were not reported. The only Lesser Golden Plovers observed were 3 on September 19 by Swan L. in Johnson Co. (IOU convention party; NH). Black-bellied Plovers were in October on RRR (GB), and from September 21 to November 2 on the CoR and at Swan L., where the high count was 20 on September 26 (MN). Petersen netted 2 Am. Woodcocks, and saw "many" between October 11 and 31. A Greater Yellowlegs occurred on the late date of November 6 at DeSoto NWR (JD). One of the many Pectoral Sandpipers on the CoR was still present on November 25 (NH). Up to 10 Baird's Sandpipers were seen at Credit Island August 28 and September 28 (A. Mueller and PP), and they were continuously present on the mudflats of Swan L. September 2-19, with a peak count of 9 (NH). Both dowitchers were repeatedly observed and distinguished by their call notes at Credit Island (A. Mueller and PP) in the course of September. Two W. Sandpipers were seen at RRR on August 28 (J. Bowles fide GB). On September 15, 2 Buff-breasted Sandpipers were spotted by Swan L. (NH). One obligingly stayed until the 19th, and thrilled m.ob. from the IOU convention at Cedar Rapids. Few Sanderlings were in evidence: a total of 5 at Credit Island on August 28 and September 28 (A. Mueller and PP), and 3 on the CoR September 25 (NH). Two flocks of Am. Avocets graced the RRR:10 on September 1 (J. Bowles fide GB) and 14 on October 1 (GB).

**Gulls, Terns.** The high count of Ring-billed Gulls (1000+) was reported from RRR (GB,HD), where about 5000 Franklin's Gulls also stopped over during September and into October (GB). The latter occurred in much more modest numbers (no more than 3 at a time) at the CoR, September 28-October 2. Bonaparte's Gulls ranged over the state: 2 at Sabula on October 31 (PP), a maximum of 9 on the CoR October 17-November 2 (m.ob.), 7 on the late date of November 13 at RRR (GB,H-D), and 12 on October 23 at Cherokee (MB). The season's nonpareil non-passerine was Iowa's third Black-legged Kittiwake, an imm. bird first seen on October 27 over the CoR (NH). Thanks to an impromptu hotline, the bird could be viewed by 6 additional birders, from Iowa City, Cedar Rapids and Davenport, although it stayed only for one more day (see separate note). Eight Forster's Terns on September 9 at the CoR were joined by 3 Com. Terns, which stayed for 3 days (NH). Caspian Terns were conspicuous at the CoR between September 9 and October 2, with the high count of 33 on September 20 (NH); on the same day, there were 20 at RRR (GB), and, on September 28, 2 at Credit Island. This has been a poor year for Black Terns: a meager 4 at the CoR on September 4 rounded out the fall migration (NH).

**Cuckoos through Woodpeckers.** A few \*Yellow-billed Cuckoos were still heard in HHP in early September, but only one was at RRR (GB); Petersen banded 4 August 22-September 22. Records of \*Black-billed Cuckoos are even more meager: occasional sightings by the CoR in early September (NH), one at Newton

September 9-12 (HD), and but one banded (September 4, PP). Gladys Black saw a Long-eared Owl on November 7, and saved one from a steel trap (but not from amputation of a leg) on November 9. A total of 18 Saw-whet Owls were banded October 10-November 5, with 7 on October 27 an all-time high for one day (PP). Five Whip-poor-wills were banded September 15-October 3 (PP). On September 8, Newlon witnessed the spectacular descent of some 1500 Chimney Swifts into a downtown Iowa City chimney. Up to 2 Pileated Woodpeckers were seen on Credit Island September 4 and 28. (PP). The comment that imm. \* Red-headed Woodpeckers were unusually common in late November at Des Moines (WB) deserves attention because of the paucity of immatures noted in the Iowa City area in the summer report. Petersen netted 25 Sapsuckers between September 21 and October 25. One was still seen daily at Fred Kent's feeder at the end of the period. Information on the status of the \* Hairy Woodpecker is regrettably sketchy: only Gladys Black wrote that she had seen none on field trips but had 2 at her feeder.

**Flycatchers through Corvids.** Many field observers apparently miss Yellow-bellied Flycatchers: the fact that 47 were banded August 15-September 24 seems to belie the rarity of this Empidonax. The count for netted Acadian Flycatchers (4 between August 24 and September 9, PP) is in better keeping with its "rare" status. A Tree Swallow at Mark Twain NWR on November 14 was late indeed (PP). Reports on swallow migrations were generally favorable. In the Iowa City area, only the Rough-winged didn't occur in flights of hundreds to thousands. A Black-billed Magpie consorting with crows was seen on October 24 near Larabee (MB).

**Titmice through Wrens.** The season's passerine prize goes to Iowa's second Boreal Chickadee, a lucky bird which blundered into Mrs. Warters' avian Land of Cockaigne at Des Moines on November 16 and, predictably, settled down for the duration to wax fat on suet and peanuts (see detailed note by Woody Brown). A black-and-white closeup of this waif from the north was published in the November 25 issue of the *Des Moines Register*; color photos were taken on November 24 (NH). The reports received give no clear picture of the \* Tufted Titmouse's status. Red-breasted Nuthatches arrived early (Iowa City: August 29, MN; Davenport: August 19); the 6 banded between the latter date and November 26 were considered a good count (PP). The Boreal Chickadee's stiffest competition for suet comes from 4 Red-breasted Nuthatches. It was a poor fall for Brown Creepers, with only 32 netted between September 23 and November 6 (PP). A late House Wren was banded on October 14 (PP). Although single Winter Wrens were reported by several people (MN,GB,RM fide WB), the total of 8 banded between September 15 and October 28 (PP) was considered disappointing. Single Carolina Wrens were observed in NE Polk County on November 1 (DM) and at Effigy Mounds (DK); they were regularly seen and heard by Iowa City Birders in HHP and other places; as usual, one is a regular at Fred Kent's feeder and three regularly visit Petersen's feeder. Five Marsh Wrens were on Credit Island on September 4 (A. Mueller and PP), and several in late September by the CoR (MN) and at Cone Marsh (NH). Sedge Wrens abounded around the CoR in early September, with the last seen on October 10 (MN).

**Thrushes through Shrikes.** Fifteen \* Wood Thrushes were banded August 28 - September 29. The last of 157 Swainson's was banded, late, on October 30; October 1 was also a late date for the netting of the last of 37 Veeries (PP). Favorable reports on the numbers of E. Bluebirds came from RRR (GB), Marion and Warren Counties (R. McGeogh fide GB), Ankeny (DM) and Iowa City (RD). Blue-gray Gnatcatchers are unusual fall migrants: 3 sightings in HHP August 28-31 (MN,T-S,NH) may have involved the same bird. One was seen September 11 on Credit



Island (A. Mueller fide PP). Water Pipits were at a premium: 2 shuttled between Swan L. and the CoR September 21-October 3 (NH,MN), and one was at RRR on November 13 (GB,HD). Hundreds of Cedar Waxwings roamed downtown Iowa City from mid-October through November. Single N. Shrikes were seen in 3 different locations in and near Iowa City on November 6 (MN,RD), 12 (NH) and 14 (Calvin Knight fide MN). An impressive total of 10 was reported from NE Iowa for November 18-28 (DK). There were "many" \*Loggerhead Shrikes in Marion and Warren Counties (actual numbers not given) (G. McGeogh fide GB).

**Vireos, Warblers.** Up to 4 White-eyed Vireos, including an immature, were seen and heard in HHP August 28-September 11 (MN,RD,NH), and one still sang vigorously as late as September 25 (TS). In the same location, up to 3 \*Bell's Vireos were heard singing until August 31 by the same observers. Also, several Philadelphia Vireos occurred there between August 28 and September 6; 8 were banded September 4-24 in Davenport (PP). The warbler migration through HHP was early and outstanding in its variety. During the last 10 days of August, 4 observers (RD,NH,MN and TS), working independently and mostly between 8 and 10 a.m., recorded 20 species. For comparison, note that only 3 of these had been seen in August from 1949 through 1973 (Kents, "Birding in Eastern Iowa"). Petersen banded 24 warbler species this fall. Golden-winged Warblers, rare in the fall, were seen in HHP by 3 (RD,NH,MN), August 28-September 6; at Davenport, Mrs. Petersen saw one on September 4, and 3 were banded September 1-10 (PP). The Nashville Warbler had a poor migration, but the last one was netted on the late date of October 30 (PP). News about the \*Yellow Warbler is discouraging: none were seen at HHP, and only 2 banded on September 4 and 7 (PP). The female Black-throated Blue Warblers seen, respectively, on September 19 (NH) and 23 (MN) in HHP may have been the same bird; Petersen banded 8 between September 1 and 10. He caught and banded a late Bay-breasted on October 22 and recaptured it on the 30th. Blackpoll Warblers were scarce: none in HHP and only 2 netted in Davenport (PP). The rare Connecticut Warbler had a good migration: 3 observers saw one each in HHP August 28-31 (RD,MN,TS), 3 were banded in late August (PP), and one shared Fred Kent's bird bath other warblers on October 2. Three Mourning Warblers were netted September 1-16 (PP), and one was a window casualty in Iowa City on September 6 (MN). The only \*Yellow-breasted Chat recorded was one banded by Petersen on August 30. A Wilson's Warbler on August 22 and a Canada on August 29 in Sioux Center (JV) were deemed remarkable that far W.

**Blackbirds, Tanagers.** A female-plumaged Orchard Oriole seen in HHP on September 9 (RD) was exceptionally late. The only Brewer's Blackbird in the notes was a female seen in the company of several Rusty Blackbirds S of L. Macbride on October 3 (NH). Eleven Scarlet Tanagers were netted this fall with 6 on September 28 (PP).

**Finches, Sparrows.** The Evening Grosbeak seen September 19 on the IOU field trip (see September issue of IBL) has apparently been the only one of the season. Purple Finches appeared early (August 29 at Davenport, PP), but there was a hiatus after the birds seen August to early October - not until November 11 did they appear again in good numbers (PP), and they have been missing from feeders elsewhere in the state. The only report of Pine Siskins also refers to birds banded near the Petersens' house after November 11. There have been no crossbills yet this fall. DeCoster saw 11 Rufous-sided Towhees this fall, 4 were banded between September 26-October 30 (PP). Savannah Sparrows were abundant around the CoR through September and into early October. There were few observations of Grasshopper Sparrows: 2 seen on September 19 at the CoR, and one banded at



Pine Hill Cemetery on September 27 (only the sixth netted in that site, PP). Le Conte's Sparrows staged an extravaganza in the Iowa City area. On September 26, the Newlons and the Knights discovered between 10 and 20 members of this species in a weedy field near the CoR. Next morning, in the same approximate area, 22 were counted (RD), and their concentration was estimated at 20 birds per 100 sq. meters, with 80 percent immatures (NH). The birds were easily found on September 28 by Tom Shires, and on the next day by Tom Kent. In the same general vicinity 8-10 birds were seen up to October 10 (RD,MN). Since only very limited portions of the many areas covered with hostile, burry weeds along the CoR were explored, it is not far-fetched to assume that the total number of LeConte's Sparrows there in late September-early October could have been in the hundreds. On October 15, 2 were encountered in Kent Park (MN et al.); on the 31st, one N of the CoR (NH), and on November 7, one in HHP (RD). On November 12, one flew to its doom and was elevated to specimen status in the Putnam Museum (PP). All parties seeing the LeConte's Sparrows by the CoR also found one or 2 Sharp-tailed Sparrows along with them, so a total number of 5 for this rare migrant must be a conservative estimate. N. Juncos arrived early (September 11) in Decorah (DK). Many Clay-colored Sparrows traversed the Hamburg area in September (IG). The only reference to Harris' Sparrow is in Newlon's report (2 in Kent Park, October 15). On the same occasion, 3 White-crowned Sparrows were also seen; none were netted all fall (PP). The total count for Song Sparrows banded between September 10 and October 5 was a low 40 (PP). About 20-25 Lapland Longspurs were seen flying overhead S of the CoR on November 25 (NH). Snow Buntings arrived rather early, on October 31, at Sabula (flock of 14, PP) and the CoR (flock of 25, m.ob). The high count thus far has been about 70 at the Sugar Bottom area of the CoR (MN,RD) on November 14.

Contributors. Gladys Black, Pleasantville; Marion Brewer, Cherokee; Woodward Brown, Des Moines; Rich DeCoster, Iowa City; James Dinsmore, Ames; Herb Dorow, Newton; Ione Getscher, Hamburg; Nicholas Halmi, Iowa City; Darwin Koenig, Decorah; Richard Mooney, Des Moines; Dean Mosman, Ankeny; Mike Newlon, Iowa City; Tom Shires, Iowa City; James Van Dyk, Sioux Center. N. S. HALMI, R NO. 6, IOWA CITY, IOWA 52240.

**Observations requested:** Field Reports are not meaningful without coverage from all parts of Iowa. A report need not cover all species seen, just the most significant observations and information on "Blue List" species. Reporting can be a fine club project. Let's see double the number of contributors for the winter season! ed.

## Field Reports Schedule

So as to co-ordinate reporting of bird sightings to IBL and American Birds, the following schedule will be adopted, starting with the Fall 1976 season.

### Season

Spring (April 1 - May 31)  
 Summer (June 1 - July 31)  
 Fall (August 1 - November 30)  
 Winter (December 1 - March 31)

### Reports to Field Reports

Editor due by:

June 7  
 August 7  
 December 7  
 February 15 for I.B.L.  
 April 7 for Am. Birds only

## GENERAL NOTES



**Boreal Chickadee in Des Moines** -- Mrs. Lurene Warters of Des Moines called the morning of November 17 to say there was what "had to be" a Brown-headed Chickadee (Peterson's name) feeding in her yard. That afternoon Dick Mooney and I went to Mrs. Warters' home, 5115 Woodland Ave., and after a few minutes wait saw a Boreal Chickadee (*Parus hudsonicus*) at distances as close as 10 feet. The bird repeatedly fed on suet and peanuts, going from one feeder to another. The brown cap and back and reddish flanks made identification certain. Mrs. Warters has numerous feeders and there are many birds to be seen throughout the year. During our 40-minute visit we saw also Black-capped Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse, White and Red-breasted Nuthatch, Hairy and Downy Woodpecker, White-throated Sparrow, Northern Junco and Cedar Waxwing. The Boreal Chickadee appears to be the second published Iowa record. The bird is still present on December 6. WOODWARD H. BROWN, 432 Tonawanda Dr., Des Moines.

**Black-legged Kittiwake on the Coralville Reservoir** -- On October 27, 1976 I was scanning the Coralville Reservoir with 7x35 binoculars where it is widest, due north of North Liberty. At 4:20 P.M. I noticed several gulls to the east. The light was excellent, since it was a clear day and the sun behind me was almost in line with me and the birds. Several of the gulls were clearly Ring-bills, but others were smaller. At least one of these showed the white wing triangles characteristic of adult Bonaparte's while banking. Soon my attention was fixed on another gull, however. This had a dark diagonal band crossing its secondaries, a black leading edge of the primaries, a slightly forked tail with a black edge and, when it banked at the proper angle, it revealed a prominent black nuchal crescent bordered above and below with white. The bird several times hovered briefly and made almost tern-like plunges. It then alighted on the water. I moved as close as I could (est. 300 meters) and set up my 20-45 x zoom scope. This confirmed the very clear nuchal crescent, disclosed a black spot behind the eye, an otherwise white head, and a rather stubby, all-black bill. Upon my return home, I alerted Mike and Carol Newlon, who also located the bird and confirmed my diagnosis of "immature Black-legged Kittiwake". I had previously seen a similar bird off a ferry in New Brunswick (July 1974). The black crescent in the back of the neck excluded two somewhat similar species: immature Bonaparte's and Black-headed Gulls, which also have more white in their wings (especially the latter). The even more improbable Sabine's Gull was eliminated because it has a gray triangle (not a diagonal band) on its wing and, in the immature plumage, gray extending from the back on the head, without any nuchal band. The immature Little Gull is much smaller than the bird seen; if it does have a nuchal crescent, this is merely an extension of the gray back, from which it is not separated by white; and the head shows a black cap as well as retro-ocular spots. This seems to be only the third observation of the Black-legged Kittiwake in Iowa. However, *American Birds* reported 11 fall sightings of this pelagic gull in Illinois for the period 1971-75. N. S. HALMI, RR NO. 6, Iowa City.





**Recollections of Days Gone By** -- I just had to stop and take this picture. It was a reminder of boyhood days of sixty or more years ago. Please excuse me for indulging in a bit of reminiscence. After all, this is Bicentennial Year. On our return from northern Texas Edy and I came upon this scene. Seeing me take pictures, F. J. Osborn, Fairland, Oklahoma, waved at me and then came to the roadside to chat with me. This weather-wrinkled faced farmer's eyes twinkled as he and I exchanged memories of days when horses pulled the farm machinery. We remembered how the birds would hover over our heads, and suddenly pouncing down to get that fat and juicy grub exposed in the newly upturned earth.

We shared our feelings about how millions of dollars are spent for insecticides now, when years ago the birds would do the job free if we would just leave them enough habitat for shelter, a place to nest and rear their young. Osborn also pointed out that because of the many small lakes in this northeast Oklahoma corner it contributed to the factor that the gulls would head for the farm lands for a varied diet of insects from the land together with the fish and other things the lakes provided. HERB DOROW, 1200 S. 8th Ave. E., Newton.

**Fall Migration at Red Rock** -- With the dry conditions this year, the level of Red Rock Lake has been unusually low. This, along with a high degree of siltation, has produced a most ideal habitat for the shorebird migration this fall. Every common migrant species of plover, sandpiper, gull and heron visited the Red Rock area this year, and most in very high numbers. From late July through October, 95 species were seen at Red Rock by Gladys Black, John Bowles and the author.

American Avocets were viewed in flocks of 15 by Gladys Black, my brother Jay, and I on Oct. 1st and 10 in early Sept. by Dr. John Bowles of Central College.

Four Am. White Pelicans left the area the 3rd week in September after staying 2 months.

The Oct. 1st birdwatching also produced a flock of 28 Double-crested Cormorants flying in V formation.

Dowitcher counts have been consistently high all season. Hundreds were here in August and we had a count of 56 on the 24th of Oct. Small numbers were still feeding on the mudflats in early November.

Small flocks of Semipalmated, Black-bellied, and Golden Plovers were sighted throughout the month of October.



Great Blue Heron counts were high. Beginning in July and through August we had counts of over 150 from a single view points. Six Great Egrets were seen at Whitebreast Bay, and small groups of Black-crowned Night Herons and American Bitterns were spotted on the upper end of the lake near Runnels.

Caspian Terns were in small numbers, but stayed all through September and into October, while a flock of Franklins Gulls numbering between 350 and 400 was here for 2 weeks in September.

Broad-winged Hawks were seen in a kettle estimated at 60 by Mr. and Mrs. Paul Felsing on Sept. 16 and the following week by smaller kettle up in the refuge.

An Albino Red-tailed Hawk, first seen last year, has returned. Bald Eagles are frequently seen in some areas of the lake, they were first spotted on the 25th of September (by my 4 year old daughter).

Small flocks of Bairds' Sandpipers have been seen frequently, and a flock of Westerns was reported by Dr. Bowles.

The duck and geese movement was very late at Red Rock with very small numbers up until the 3rd week in October when bigger flocks started coming in. The hunting pressure was extremely heavy and the refuge area drastically reduced and consequently few of the waterfowl are staying as compared to previous years. A single female Canvasback was seen on a farm and a Gadwall was shot at Red Rock the first week in November.

Nature has once again proven her ability to somehow benefit and show some sort of prosperity in the midst of another ecological disaster constructed by man. Originally there was supposed to be an extensive inviolate refuge included in Red Rock managed by the Conservation Commission. Due to siltation and dry conditions it became of no value to migrating waterfowl so they reduced the acreage from 8,000 to 2,000 compared to total managed area of 26,000 acres. The 2,000 acres of refuge gets violated every weekend and therefore we really have no refuge at all! -- JON STRAVERS, Rt. 2, Pella.

**The Yellow-headed Blackbird in Iowa** -- The paper "Distribution of the Yellow-headed Blackbird in Iowa" by Milton W. Weller (I.B.L. XXXIX:3-5) contained a map of the state showing where the Yellow-headed Blackbird (*Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus*) had been found nesting in 1960-62, and a table giving details of the observations. According to the map, the southernmost nestings were at a pothole three miles northwest of Jefferson, and Blue, Decatur, and Bend Lakes, west of Onawa, or about 42 degrees N. latitude.

For a number of years prior to 1966 there were numerous spring and fall sightings, but few reports of this species in the nesting season. Petersen (I.B.L. XXVI:43) and Kent (I.B.L. XXVI:64) mentioned nestings at Muskrat Slough, and Gillaspay (I.B.L. XXXIII:75) reported an apparent straggler. In the summer of 1974 additional reports of nesting Yellow-headed were received for inclusion in Field Reports (I.B.L. XLIV:74). A number of nestlings were banded that summer by Dean Mosman in a marsh northwest of Ankeny; immatures were seen south of the 41st parallel at Forneys Lake by Ruth Phipps, nestings were noted in a marsh north of Cedar Rapids by Lillian Serbousek, and immatures were seen in a shallow pond south of the Coralville Res. by Nicholas Halmi. This pond has since dried up and placed in cultivation. Nestlings in the Ankeny colony have been banded by Mosman in 1975 and 1976 also. WOODWARD H. BROWN, 432 Tonawanda Dr., Des Moines.



**Another Haven for Birds Destroyed!** -- This scene of a bulldozed nillside is different than it was last summer when it was a hedge row, providing berries and seeds for food with protection for many species of birds. It included two mulberry trees and a scattering of raspberries that grew up through the years from seeds the birds carried and dropped to take root in the undisturbed soil.

This spot is only nine blocks from our home. After retiring, I found it an ideal place to go to in the morning to watch the birds. I saw them gorge themselves with mulberries and then carry beaks full of luscious fruit to their young in nests located in small trees that were on each side of a little brook near by that always seemed, somehow, to have a little water, enough to provide for the little feathered creatures. There were always several families of Gray Catbirds. A pair of Northern Orioles and various species of warblers would add a dash of color to the scene. Winter time Northern Cardinals, Northern Juncos and a host of other winter birds would find plenty to eat -- because the hedge-row was a mile long to the south.

Yes, I will miss going to that spot. I will miss the scoldings of the little wrens as they scolded me when I came too near their nest. I will miss having to chuckle to see how the fledgling Gray Catbirds would stuff themselves with mulberries that they'd look like they were ready to burst. In winter I will miss the Cardinal's bright color against the background of the frost covered background of the hedge.

We hear that the city of Newton wants to straighten 8th Avenue. If this is done it will mean that the little brook with the trees flanking it will be bulldozed out of existence. They say "make room for progress". But when I must watch God's gift to man, nature, with its wildlife being destroyed -- I feel very sad. HERB DOROW, 1200 S. 8th Ave. E., Newton.





**The Felsings' Hospitality** -- Mr. and Mrs. Paul Felsings (they prefer to be called Mary and Paul) of rural Knoxville have made a paradise for birds around their home. Providing food and shelter in various ways, summer and winter. During the spring and fall the song birds seem to know and tell others that there is a nice place to rest a while at the Felsings . . . during migration.

But Mary, Paul and son Malcom not only love birds . . . they also love people! The 22nd of December, 1974, a group of us, including our I.O.U. President, Mrs. Charles Ayres and her husband from Ottumwa, were having our Christmas Bird count at Red Rock. It was a cold, raw and windy day to be out. We took our lunches, expecting to meet and have our lunches on a site on the south side of the mile long bridge. But the Felsings insisted that we come to their home to eat our lunches, relax and visit in comfort. Some of the group are shown in photo where Paul and Mary are standing in center. From all of us that day, to Mary, Paul and Malcom, we express our hearty thanks for your hospitality and may you find much joy in watching and feeding God's beautiful birds! HERB DOROW, 1200 South 8th Ave. E., Newton.

**TV Tower Help Needed** -- After over 4 years of study at the Alleman TV Tower Site, I have compiled a lot of data. I feel if this data could be compared to someone else's, a lot more could be learned. There must be almost 20 TV towers in Iowa that are 20,000 feet tall. I feel we must have at least a few birding people close to some of these towers that could check for bird kills and keep records on this.

Here are a few notes that may make it easier to get a study started. First contact the tower site personnel and get permission to check the tower site for bird kills. This first contact is very important. These people don't like bad publicity about bird kills. Tell them this is a scientific study to try to learn how to prevent these bird kills. The site should be checked every morning after a foggy, low overcast night with a falling barometer. Especially during the months of May and September, when at least 90 to 95 percent of the kill occurs. DEAN MOSMAN, 5185 E. Sharon Dr., Ankeny.



**Double Recapture of a Purple Finch** -- In the last issue of I.B.L. Woodward Brown chided banders for the lack of data on the results of banding. This is a well warranted comment. Probably all Iowa banders have data worthy of publication in their files. This note might suggest a way of presenting some of the data which does not constitute an article. On April 4, 1971, four Purple Finches were trapped on the author's front porch in a drop door trap and banded. On April 11, 1972 one of the birds was caught by Forest V. Strnad at Wyoming, Minnesota, about 30 miles northeast of Minneapolis. On April 13, 1972, the same bird was caught by Jane Olyphant at Lake Jane, Minnesota, about 15 miles east of Minneapolis and 25 miles south of Wyoming. Since these recaptures were over a year after the original banding the bird had returned north for the breeding season prior to recapture. It is possible that this bird wintered in Minnesota after wintering in Iowa or farther south the previous winter. PETER C. PETERSEN, 235 McClellan Blvd., Davenport.

**Ospreys' Defense of Nest** -- The following incident, while not an Iowa observation, is an interesting example of bird behavior. On 2 September, my wife and I were parked between Twin Lakes in Itasca State Park in Minnesota. A Broad-winged Hawk (*Buteo platypterus*) soon appeared and lit on a dead limb in a tall tree at the edge of a clearing. Strange cries were heard almost immediately and two Ospreys (*Pandion haliaetus*) came "out of nowhere" and harassed the Broad-winged until it left the area.

Mary soon espied the Ospreys' nest close by, and a little later one of the pair was seen feeding the one nestling it contained. This immature was almost ready to leave the nest as it frequently stood up and exercised its wings. A Broad-winged would hardly be expected to rob an Osprey's nest, but these parents were taking no chances. WOODWARD H. BROWN, 432 Tonawanda Dr., Des Moines.

## BOOK REVIEWS



**Birds, Their Life, Their Ways, Their World** -- Christopher Perrins -- Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York -- 160 p., over 500 color illustrations by Ad Cameron -- 1976 -- \$19.85.

No fall season can pass without the production of another lavish, general volume on birds. The thrust of this book is purported to be treating birds as living animals. All aspects of avian biology, including evolution, anatomy, feeding, habitats, social behavior, breeding and migration are covered. The stress is on the European species most familiar to the author and artist, but American, Asian and African forms are not overlooked. The illustrations are generally good and the reproduction excellent. Exceptions to the quality of the illustrations are chiefly American birds unfamiliar to the artist, especially the brown Chimney Swifts on p. 47. For a general text on birds with more than adequate illustrations and reasonably priced for the current market this book is a good choice. ed.

**Birds of the West Coast, Vol. 1** -- J. F. Landsdowne -- Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston -- 1976 p., 52 color plates, 52 drawings -- 1976 -- \$40.00.

Six years have past since the last book of Landsdowne paintings appeared. The three previous volumes dealt with northern and eastern species. In this volume the artist turns to the birds of the area where he grew up. Landsdowne is probably the leading bird artist of today and is often being compared with Audubon. This collection is well balanced between water and land birds and features four double-page fold-out illustrations. Most birds are reproduced life-sized. The text is written for the general reader, summarizing the life history of the species illustrated. The drawings give some insight on the way the paintings were developed. It is an expensive book but is probably worth the price. ed.

**The Audubon Society Book of Wild Birds** -- Les Line and Franklin Russell -- Harry N. Abrams, Inc., New York -- 292 p., 203 color photographs -- 1976 -- \$35.00.

Each fall several lavish large format "cocktail table" bird books appear. This year the clear cut choice for most outstanding offering is **The Audubon Society Book of Wild Birds**. The color photographs represent the work of 67 outstanding photographers from all parts of the world including Iowa's Carl Kurtz. The book is divided into fifteen chapters each dealing with an ecological or taxonomic group of species. The stress is on North American birds but other areas are also represented. The text, printed in large type, presents a short environmental study comparing survival techniques of different species. Since the book is primarily a collection of photographs it is logical for the text to be brief and intended for casual perusal. If you enjoy fine photography and birds you will want to own this beautiful book. ed.

**1001 Questions Answered About Birds** -- Allan D. and Helen G. Cruickshank -- Dover Publications, Inc., New York -- 291 p., 38 line drawings and 16 black-and-white photographs -- 1976 -- paperbound -- \$3.50.

First published in 1958 this book is designed to provide basic background information regarding birds. The questions are, for the most part, those which a field guide would not answer readily. They are organized into chapters by subject matter much like general bird texts. Although almost twenty years old the answers are basic enough to apply today. It provides a good source for the location of general life cycle and general bird-related information at a low price. ed.

**Birdland -- The Story of a World Famous Bird Sanctuary** -- Len Hill and Emma Wood -- Taplinger Publishing Co., New York -- 144 p., 29 color and 42 black-and-white photographs, 26 line drawings -- 1976 -- \$9.95.

Birdland is a five-acre avian zoo located in the Gloucestershire countryside west of London. Len Hill is a self-trained former carpenter who describes himself as "a man who loves birds". In addition to the zoo Hill purchased two islands in the Falklands which provide a breeding place for many seabirds. These islands will eventually be given to the World Wildlife Fund. The book tells of his developing the zoo into a home for about 1200 birds visited by over 700,000 people annually. ed.

**British Birds of Prey** -- Leslie Brown -- distributed by Taplinger Publishing Co., New York -- 400 p., 40 black-and-white plates, many maps and line drawings -- 1976 -- \$17.50.

Another in the New Naturalist Series this is an in-depth look at Britain's diurnal raptors. The general life history of each species is discussed in smooth prose. The species accounts are supported by a complete set of bibliographic references. The author also covers generally their way of life, classification, field identification, vagrants, migrants, changes in habitat, status and food habits, territory, population control, breeding behavior, pesticide effects and conservation. Appendices cover food and breeding of some species with specific



data. ed.

**Alabama Birds** -- Thomas Imhof -- University of Alabama Press, University, Alabama -- 445 p., 33 color plates and 4 color photographs, 11 black-and-white plates, many black-and-white photographs and maps -- 1976 -- \$22.50.

This is a revised edition of the book with the same title published in 1962 (I.B.L. 33 p. 93-94). The revision is chiefly in the species sections dealing with occurrence within the state, time of breeding and banding. The book is shorter than the original edition and thinner. This was accomplished by elimination of some photographs, chiefly depicting nests, reducing page margins, cutting space between lines, dropping some records of occurrence and using a thinner, glossy paper for everything but the color plates. The cost tripled in the process due to inflation. Anyone having the original edition is not encouraged to purchase the revision unless they are particularly interested in the occurrence data. ed.

**A Field Guide to the Birds of Britain and Europe** -- Roger Tory Peterson, Guy Mountfort and P. A. D. Hollom -- Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston -- 344 p., 44 color plates, many black-and-white plates, drawings and maps -- third edition -- 1974 -- \$10.00.

The first edition of this guide, featuring the familiar "Peterson-- format was published in 1954. A minor revision came when the second edition appeared in 1965. The third edition contains four more color plates of accidentals including many U. S. birds. When compared with two other recent guides, Brunn and Singer (I.B.L. Vol. 41, p. 114) and Heinzel, Fitter and Parslow (I.B.L. Vol. 43, p. 31-2) the Peterson guide is lacking due to the failure to use color for all species illustrations and in the maps. The text is separated from the plates requiring more time to find all the information on each species. The order of species in the text of Peterson's book has been updated but the plates are in the 1954 sequence. ed.

**Roger Tory Peterson's Dozen Birding Hot Spots** -- George H. Harrison -- Simon and Schuster, New York -- 288 p., 185 black-and-white and 12 color photographs, 12 maps -- 1976 -- \$9.95.

Harrison and his wife spent a year traveling around the country hitting Roger Peterson's favorite birding areas at the ideal season. The areas are the Everglades, southern Texas, Platte River in Nebraska, southeast Arizona, Point Pelee, Bear River in Utah, coastal Maine, Gaspe in Quebec, Hawk Mountain, Cape May, New Jersey, Horicon Refuge and the Tule Klamath, Malheur Refuges. A useful feature is a section in each chapter titled visitor tips which covers recommended time to visit, clothing, lodging, restaurants, camping and picnic areas, reservations, rest rooms, telephone, gasoline, groceries, hospital, airport and bird list sources. These details can be very important and are often not covered. The book is not a birders guide but interesting comments on some outstanding areas. ed.

**Bird Flight Photography** -- Roger F. Cram -- Creative Arts Photography, Box 642, Hiram, Ohio -- 35 p., several diagrams -- 1975 -- paperbound -- \$3.95.

This little book presents a method for taking flight pictures of birds with any camera at 1/60th of a second and a simple electronic flash at a home feeder. In addition to explaining the basic method for flight photography, the author provides suggestions for other photographic situations and some problem solutions. He also offers to critique a photograph taken by a purchaser for no charge, an interesting service. ed.

**Rocky Mountain Wildlife** -- Don Blood, Tom W. Hall and Susan Baumgarten -- Hancock House Publishers, Inc., 12008 1st Ave. S. Seattle, Washington -- 300 p., nearly 700 color and black-and-white photographs, about 300 line drawings and one map -- 1976 -- \$24.95.



While not primarily concerned with birds, this book may be of value to birders in the Rocky Mountains for its good general introduction to the ecology and wildlife of the area. The first part is an ecological profile of the area and a discussion of the mammals and birds and their behavior. The second part presents specific, detailed information on the mammals. The photographs are superb and probably the strongest feature of the book. The same publisher has also released a greatly shortened booklet titled **Guide to the Wildlife of the Rockies** by David and Susan Hancock (2.50 paperbound). Featuring Hall's photographs it briefly introduces the novice naturalist to some of the commoner animals of the Rockies. ed.

**The Bluebird** -- Lawrence Zeleny -- Indiana University Press, Bloomington -- 170 p., 7 color and 27 black-and-white photographs, several line drawings, one map -- 1976 -- \$7.95.

The subtitle of the book is "How you can Help It's Fight for Survival". This correctly suggests the main theme of the book. The life history information is covered and the population decline is discussed. Suggestions for dealing with the enemies of Bluebirds and maintaining Bluebird Trails are given. The book is written for the general reader with specific details for box construction and an extensive bibliography. It is overall a good plea for continued effort to encourage all three Bluebirds to breed in the U. S. ed.

**The Third Bird-Watcher's Book** -- John Gooders, ed. -- David and Charles, North Pomfret, Vt. -- 160 p., 24 black-and-white photographs -- 1976 -- \$9.95.

The first two books in this series have previously been reviewed (I.B.L. Vol. 45, p. 63 and Vol. 46, p. 31). The format consists of chapters by various authors on their areas of expertise much like journal articles. Most of the subject matter deals with European birds but a chapter on the English (common) names of birds by Stuart Keith will interest American birders as will Gooder's chapter "In Praise of Birding". Other general topics are the feeding niches of seabirds, saving oiled birds, birds of the Uruguayan swamplands, keeping a clean nest and the moult of waders. If you watch birds and want to expand your horizons you will find this book of interest. ed.

**South Pacific Birds** -- John duPont -- Delaware Museum of Natural History, Greenville -- 218 p., 31 color plates -- 1976 -- \$25.00.

The South Pacific has long needed an adequate, well-illustrated field guide. This volume fills the need very nicely. The text describes the birds including notes on plumages not illustrated and provides a brief note on the life histories of some of the species. A complete bibliography and list of island names is included. The price is high but the other publications are so inadequate it is well worth the cost. ed.

**Birds of the West** -- Herbert Clarke and Arnold Small -- A. S. Barnes & Co., Cranbury, M. J. -- 143 p. 282 color and 10 black-and-white photographs, 6 maps -- 1976 -- \$30.00.

This volume is a reference book featuring color photographs to introduce bird study to the growing ranks of nature enthusiasts. The area covered is from the Rocky Mountains to the Pacific coast. The species are grouped by habitat associations with the table of contents in check list order. The photographs depict just over 200 species and are consistently good. They are grouped four to six per page and the reproduction is generally good with four pages being out of register in the review copy examined. The text provides some introductory life history information on the species covered. One chapter is devoted to the photographic techniques employed by the authors. A brief bibliography caps a good collection of photographs and concise text. ed.

**Crows of the World** -- Derek Goodwin -- Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York -- 354 p., 3 color plates, many line drawings and maps -- 1976 -- \$28.50.

The number of monographs on avian families continues to grow with the addition of a very well written offering on the Crows. The author stresses that his book shows what is not known as much as what is known. The coverage begins with nomenclature, adaptive radiation including sociability, reactions to sick and injured and vocal mimicry. The major portion of the text deals with the 116 species individually, covering description, distribution, habitat, feeding, general habits, nesting, voice, display and references. Range maps are included for all species as well as line drawings for many forms. Color plates illustrate 22 species including four depicting both adult and juvenile plumages. Although expensive this is a valuable book for serious researchers. ed.

**Birdwatchers' Guide to Wildlife Sanctuaries** -- Jessie Kitching -- Arco Publishing Co., New York -- 233 p., 21 black-and-white photographs -- 1976 -- \$8.95.

Areas set aside for wildlife are, of course, excellent places to look for birds. This book describes 295 such areas in the U. S. and Canada. Most National Wildlife Refuges are included but the coverage is rather spotty overall. The Iowa areas included are De Soto and Union Slough N. W. R. and Effigy Mounds National Monument. You can probably suggest other equally interesting areas yourself. Soem noticeable omissions near Iowa include Fontenelle Forest, Omaha and Cheyenne Bottoms, Kansas. The comments on the areas are brief and include the address, directions, number of species, some rare and common species, general description, special precautions and checklist date. The book is worth checking prior to a trip but should not be depended upon as the only source of good birding areas. ed.

**Wintering of the Migrant Bald Eagle in the Lower 48 States** -- Donald A. Spencer -- National Agricultural Chemical Association, 1155 15th St. N. W., Washington, D. C. -- 170 p., several maps and black-and-white photographs -- 1976 -- no charge.

This booklet, available at no charge while supplies last, consists largely of comments from field biologists regarding eagle observations. Much original observation data is included in tabular form. It is well presented and will be of interest to all eagle watchers. ed.

**The View from Great Gull** -- Michael Harwood -- E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., New York -- 139 p., many line drawings, one map -- 1976 -- \$8.95.

Great Gull Island is a tern rookery which lies between Long Island and Connecticut. The island is owned by the American Museum of Natural History and much research is conducted during the breeding season. Harwood intersperses a lively description of the biological work with much of the interesting history of the island which was once an army fort. ed.

**Birdwatchers' Year** -- Leo Batten, Jim Flegg, Jeremy Sorensen, Mike J. Wareing, Donald Watson and Malcolm Wright -- T. & A. D. Poyser, Ltd., Berkhamsted, U. K. -- 351 p., illustrated with black-and-white photographs and line drawings -- 1973 -- \$11.95.

This book is really six years of bird activity and behavior as recorded by six experienced birdwatchers in six habitats. The habitats are an urban area, woodland, wetland, farmland, mountain and moorland and an island. Each area is well known to each author and the result is an interesting combination of writing styles. ed.

**Bird Observatories in Britain and Ireland** -- Roger Durman, ed. -- T. & A. D. Poyser, Ltd., Berkhamsted, U. K. -- 292 p., 17 black-and-white photographs, many line drawings, tables and maps -- 1976 -- \$14.50.

Bird observatories have been a significant factor in the study of birds in the U. K. for many years while they are just becoming important in the U. S. This book



deals with the fourteen accredited observatories in Britain and Ireland described by sixteen authors. It covers the history, work and present status of each observatory. Also included is a tabular appendix of the status of all species recorded for each observatory. ed.

**Rare Birds in Britain and Ireland** -- J. T. R. and E. M. Sharrock -- T. & A. D. Poyser, Ltd., Berkhamsted, U. K. -- 336 p., 221 line drawings, many maps and charts -- 1976 -- \$16.95.

Dr. Sharrock and his wife have collated over 8000 records of 221 species rare to Britain and Ireland. Maps with various size spots indicate the places where the birds are found and bar graphs show the months. The line drawings depict all 221 species, many of them U. S. birds, and are the work of five leading artists. This type of book for the U. S. would be most valuable but it is doubtful if the data base exists to produce such a volume. ed.

**Flight Identification of European Raptors** -- R. T. Potter, Ian Willis, Steen Christensen and Bent Pors Nielsen -- T. & A. D. Poyser, Ltd., Berkhamsted, U. K. -- 264 p., 176 black-and-white photographs, many line drawings -- 1974 -- \$15.95.

Europe has 38 species of raptors and the authors of this book conclude that even the expert cannot hope to identify more than seventy percent of the individuals encountered in the field. The birds are treated in seven sections being grouped by similarity of field characteristics. Each group has an introductory comparative text and drawings, then each species is detailed as to silhouette, flight and identification points. The photographs illustrate field situations and expand nicely on the text. This is again the type of book quite lacking in the U. S. ed.

**Addenda** -- In the review of **Prairie Birds in Color** by Doug Gilroy in the September issue of *I.B.L.* the comment was made that some of the photographs were of hand held birds. The author has informed me that none of the birds were hand held and I would like to correct the record. The photographs in question were of hawks and showed only the upper two-thirds of the bird. This often is done to crop out a hand. Another book reviewed in September, **The Birds of John Burroughs** by Jack Kligerman is also available in hard cover for \$6.95. Mr. Kligerman's name was spelled incorrectly also. ed.

## Help Needed

A volunteer is needed to index *I.B.L.* for the period 1976-1980. An early start makes the task easier. If interested, write the editor.

## Memberships Past Due

Memberships are due the end of the year. Each member is encouraged to pay now to save expense and the Treasurer's time. Remit to Mrs. Ruth Buckles, 5612 Urbandale Ave, Des Moines, Iowa 50310. The map on the back cover shows the distribution of our membership.

